

**Town of Lincoln**

**Budget Board Meeting**

**March 30, 2006**

**Members Present:**

**Ken Booth Roberta Gosselin Bob Ericson Carl Brunetti Claudette Lussier**

**Greg Leonard Jack Newman Mary Varr Linda Noble Cheryl Ethier**

**Members Absent:**

**Joe Dziobek**

**The meeting began at 7:35 with the Pledge of Allegiance.**

**The School Department came before the Budget Board, along with the Medicaid Claims Consultant that the schools have hired, to discuss Medicaid revenues.**

**The fees charged by the Medicaid claims consultant are 6% of what is collected.**

**Cheryl Ethier asked if there was a certain percentage of claims that were denied.**

**There are some that are just submitted incorrectly, but the amount of claims that are denied after resubmission is very small and infrequent.**

**Roberta Gosselin asked if there was a forecast of the percentage of claims that get reimbursed and the trend of reimbursements.**

**The consultant does a snapshot of one week of claims, and Georgia**

**Fortunato stated that she tries to pick a week to be evaluated that will be a good indication of the actual activity, when there is not vacation, etc.**

**It ends up to be \$9,000 - \$12,000 per quarter paid to the consultant.**

**Every month, all invoices and claims are submitted, eligibility is checked on each claim because status changes often, and it is about 2 weeks from the time that the claim is submitted to the time that a check for the reimbursements is received.**

**Any claims that were erroneously not filed can be filed within a year of services rendered.**

**Roberta Gosselin asked if there was any software that would be beneficial to the reimbursement process.**

**Georgia Fortunato stated that there was a software package that would help tracking, making sure services are rendered, and allow forms to be filled out on the computer.**

**The schools are currently talking with the Collaborative about the program.**

**Roberta Gosselin asked if the town could be reimbursed for the expense of the software package.**

**The Medicaid consultant stated that although they could submit the claim, it probably would be denied.**

**The cost of the program is \$15 per student per year.**

**Roberta Gosselin asked how many students there are in the Special Education Program.**

**Georgia Fortunato replied that there were 621.**

**Georgia has 2 secretaries who are responsible for the monthly**

reporting of invoices and claim information. Everything gets submitted whether or not it is believed it will be reimbursed.

Funding for the new software package will be in next years' budget request.

The current state administration wants to cut Medicaid reimbursements and that will cause revenues to decrease for the schools.

Some of the things that will be eliminated from the reimbursable items will include transportation, and case management

The reimbursement rate will be reduced 3.5 – 4%

Even given the reduction, the claims consultant felt that Lincoln should receive \$500,000 in reimbursements.

Cheryl Ethier noted that the decision to decrease reimbursements could also be reversed.

The reimbursements in Lincoln have been increasing due to better claiming practices.

Roberta Gosselin asked if there was anything besides the new software program that would help the claiming process.

The consultant noted that training is essential and he does not get to spend enough time training the school staff.

Jack Newman asked if there were any other expenses besides the \$15 per student per year to run the new program.

The consultant stated that there were not.

Ken Booth wondered if students leaving the school system or even being brought back in district from tuition placements could hurt Medicaid revenues.

**Georgia Fortunato stated that there are 30 total students out of district, and it may be that only 3 come back, which would not significantly reduce Medicaid revenues.**

**Ken Booth thanked the Medicaid Claims Consultant for appearing before the Budget Board, and stated that the meeting was very informative.**

**Ken Booth stated that he had concerns regarding the requested Special Financial Town meeting because it has been made known that the intent of the meeting is also to secure more funding by also use the 30% reimbursement from the new practice football field to fund an amount that will be exceeded in doing the project.**

**Ken Booth noted that the Budget Board did not back a resolution last year for the practice football field because it was not properly prepared.**

**Lori Miller noted that if the field construction is completed by June 30th, the schools will receive their reimbursement in October.**

**The money to complete the project will come from the schools until the reimbursement is received.**

**Jeff Weiss noted that another suggestion would be to move the new practice field to the new middle school site, which would allow it to be ready sooner and more centrally located.**

**Linda Noble asked what would happen if the amount given, plus the extra 30% from reimbursements, was spent and more money was still needed to complete the project, where it would come from.**

**Roberta Gosselin noted that it costs about \$800 for the lights at Chet**

**Nichols Field to be used, so there should be a fee charged to use the field to offset the expense.**

**Angelo Mennucci stated that the amounts given would total to \$88,000 and that the project should be able to remain within that amount, even if it meant going without lights on the new field for the first year, etc.**

**The Budget Board broke into School and Municipal Subcommittees. The notes from the School Subcommittee can be found as an addendum.**

**The Budget Board then reconvened.**

**The minutes of March 23rd and 29th were distributed for review.**

**Jack Newman made a motion to accept the minutes of March 23rd, seconded by Bob Ericson.**

**The minutes of March 23rd were accepted by a vote of 8-0.**

**Bob Ericson made a motion to accept the minutes of March 29th, seconded by Mary Varr.**

**Mary Varr noted that she still would like information on the long-term substitutes.**

**The minutes of March 29th were accepted by a vote of 8-0.**

**Ken Booth noted that the errors in the budgeted numbers appear not to be just errors created by moving columns in a spreadsheet, and he stated that the Administrator was working on correcting the problem, but that the corrections would not cause the budget to exceed the**

**5.5% cap.**

**He also noted that the Administrator's recommended budget was under funded.**

**Mary Varr made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Jack Newman.**

**The meeting adjourned at 10:10.**

### **3/30/2006 – School Subcommittee Meeting Notes**

**The School Department was present to answer any questions that the subcommittee may have.**

**Cheryl stated that the subcommittee had some questions on the pension and savings reform worksheet provided previously.**

**Jack asked what the obligated funds were, and what obligated meant on the worksheet.**

**Lori Miller stated that obligated means that the amount will definitely be spent in this fiscal year.**

**Professional Development has been increased to meet the amount funded by the Governor's budget.**

**Cheryl noted that the amount given by the Governor does have to be budgeted, but it is not required that it be spent.**

**The Assistant Superintendent was in charge of planning professional development, but the position has been vacant.**

**Jack Newman noted that the schools should have a plan of what**

there will be for professional development next year.

Lori Miller stated that the state does not require that information until June 30th, but Jack stated that the subcommittee was requesting that information in advance of that.

Linda wanted to know what curriculum projects were going to be worked on.

John Tindall-Gibson stated that the K-12 Science curriculum would be redone, along with new books, and that although all of the money budgeted for that will not be used this year, it will definitely be used next year.

Linda asked when and where the professional development is occurring.

John Tindall-Gibson noted that it is occurring more and more in the classroom.

Cheryl asked if the excess amount budgeted for the pension over the obligated amount could be used to fund next year's pension.

Lori Miller noted that the excess amount is not guaranteed every year, so it would not be good practice to fund next year's that way as it will create a shortfall in future years.

The subcommittee will discuss pension funding as a group.

Cheryl asked if the grounds and maintenance items get paid for by the bond, do they get reimbursed the 30%

Lori Miller replied that any items through the bond that do not relate to the new middle school will be reimbursed.

**Angelo Mennucci noted that most grounds equipment have about a 10-year life expectancy.**

**The subcommittee suggested putting lighting in the bond and painting in the capital budget.**

**The Town Administrator would have to approve such a change.**

**The subcommittee noted that some of the items left out of the revised budget recommendation are important and necessary, such as a guardrail, walkways for fire code compliance, and exterior lighting.**

**Carl asked why health insurance is lower in the budget for next year.**

**Lori Miller stated that the company came in with a figure lower than anticipated.**

**Linda was concerned that even though none of the curriculum/textbooks money has been used, the same amount is being requested next year, and she wanted to know where the money went and what the plan was for the next year.**

**Lori Miller stated that she left the amount the same because the schools did not know what would happen because at the time, there was no curriculum coordinator.**

**Some of the money from this year has been spent, and they are working on a curriculum as well as purchasing new textbooks next year.**

**This year's money will also fund some of the electricity funds that are not covered in the budgeted amount for electricity.**

**Lori Miller noted that the bills for electricity lag, so March's bill will come in April.**

**Jack Newman asked the status of the Assistant Business Manager, and pointed out differences in responsibilities in the new organization chart.**

**John Tindall-Gibson feels comfortable that the new delegations will be handled well by their delegates, and some responsibility shifted away from the Business Manager so that they could concentrate more on the operations.**

**The schools have been advertising and interviewing for the Assistant Business Manager for about a month.**

**Many people have looked at the school's situation and recommended an Assistant Business Manager.**

**John Tindall-Gibson stated that a lot of the questions that the subcommittee has are regarding information that has not been received yet, and that is because there is not enough man power in the School Department to be able to get that information on a timely basis.**

**The School Department adjourned and the School Subcommittee took a short recess.**

**The School Subcommittee discussed items to be paid for by the bond and ones that should be in the capital budget.**

**The recommendation will be that \$147,350 be in a resolution for capital items and \$288,599 will be the total amount to come from the bond.**

**Cheryl noted that nothing has been spent on fire code upgrades. Linda thought that there should be a surplus this year due to Medicaid revenues being high and a relief on the pension funding.**

**Items that the subcommittee will recommend be removed from the budget are:**

**\$106,954 for Assistant Administrators at the High School and Middle School, including fringe benefits.**

**\$83,380 for SPED Staff**

**\$55,513 for a Middle School Art Teacher**

**\$67,523 for a Music Teacher**

**\$48,940 for a Custodian**

**\$67,523 for a Social Worker**

**\$35,789 for a Teacher Assistant**

**\$34,645 for additional staff**

**\$33,921 for Literacy Coordinator**

**\$40,888 for Switchboard Secretary**

**\$40,888 for Payroll Secretary**

**Carl noted that all new employees are estimated as family plan for health care, but that statistically 30% of people chose individual coverage, so there should be a \$25,000 adjustment for that.**

**This would make the total recommended budget from the subcommittee \$44,643,640 so far.**